

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 919.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mary T. Boyle, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2018.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

## CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 919, Mary T. Boyle, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2018.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Jacky Rosen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Amy Klobuchar, Ron Wyden, Debbie Stabenow, Jeff Merkley, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher Murphy, Edward J. Markey.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, June 13, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The minority leader is recognized.

## INFLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, runaway inflation has pushed workers and families to the breaking point. According to one recent poll, nearly 60 percent of Americans are making an ef-

fort to drive less and cut back on electricity use. Three in four are pinching their budgets for food and entertainment outside the home, and two-thirds are bracing for prices to climb even higher in the coming year.

Six months ago, in December, President Biden told the American people we had reached the "peak"—the peak—"of the crisis" with inflation. He said that prices would start falling "over the next couple months." But like so many of Democrats' other confident predictions about our economy, the President's statement has proven completely false.

Friday morning's inflation report provided more official confirmation of what American consumers know painfully well: The Democrats' out-of-control inflation is not letting up. In fact, it is actually getting worse.

This year to May, consumer prices rose 8.6 percent, blowing away expectations, jumping a full percentage point over the previous month and setting—you guessed it—a new 40-year high. The data underneath tell a brutal story for working families and American businesses. The categories driving inflation last month were the ones they can't do without.

Overall energy prices clocked a year-on-year increase of nearly 35 percent. Drivers are paying 48.7 percent more at the pump. And fuel oil consumers have seen prices more than double.

Food costs continue to climb at over 10 percent. Grocery prices, in particular, hit nearly 12 percent inflation, the worst year since 1979. And full service restaurant prices saw their largest increase on record.

Of course, that is not to mention the 31-year high for inflation in the services sector, the 35-year high for rent inflation, or the 42-year high for rising airfare.

Day by day, all of these painful milestones add up to one simple reality: Americans' hard-earned dollars aren't going nearly as far as they once did. Runaway inflation has swallowed up any shot of rising pay bringing more prosperity. In fact, the average worker has seen a 3.9-percent pay cut in the last year.

One mother of two in Indiana recently reported that she is earning more than she ever has in her career but "says she still feels like she is financially losing ground." This is what she had to say:

I should be able to live on my own. I'm getting ready to pay rent and it's going to take every single dime I've made.

As one of my constituents in Barbourville put it recently, "We're cutting back on everything—and I mean everything. Gas, meat, bread, it's all expensive as hell. One moment you think you can afford to buy something, then you go to the store and it's like, 'Nope, can't get that anymore either.'"

And here is a real kicker. One young couple in Utah has taken to asking themselves weekly, "What did we spend money on that we could not have spent money on?"

Imagine if Washington Democrats were willing to engage in that sort of self-reflection. Remember, it was their policy choices that made this painful situation possible. It was the Democrats' choice to insist on flooding—flooding—the economy with trillions of dollars in liberal spending last spring. And it was Democrats' choice to spend months last summer and fall working on ways to pour even more gasoline on the fire, even though working families were already feeling the pinch of inflation.

The Democratic leader himself said last spring:

I do not think the dangers of inflation, at least in the near term, are very real.

None other than some of his own party's top economists warned the exact opposite. But Washington Democrats were not to be deterred. Working families' budgets took a backseat to the far-left's wish list, and now Democrats' decision is literally driving them off a cliff.

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Madam President, on another matter, the Senate is in the middle of proposing major legislation to expand healthcare access for veterans exposed to toxic substances in the line of duty. Doing right by our vets is a bipartisan priority. An 86-vote majority of us voted to begin processing this bill a few days back, myself included.

This legislation is not a minor fix; it is a series of major—major—changes to help more veterans. So the precise language of the final bill will have major consequences for veterans, for policy, and for government spending.

Republicans have pushed to get votes on a few commonsense amendments that would make this bipartisan bill even stronger for our veterans. For example, one of these amendments would make sure the veterans who are already in line—those who are waiting now, already in line—waiting for treatment under the current rules are not disserved or treated unfairly as an unintended consequence of the new expansion. Surely that should be completely without controversy.

Another amendment would clarify how the government accounts for the new funding to make sure the new legislation does not impose major unintended consequences on the appropriations process.

Another amendment would make it clear that new medical presumptions must rest on sound science, so Congress does not substitute our judgment for the experts'.

These are not controversial amendments. They are directly related to the substance of this bill. And given the magnitude of the changes under consideration, the Senators sponsoring these amendments have every right to expect votes on the floor. There is no reason why this important bipartisan bill should be denied a bipartisan floor process.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.